

Saltwater Fishing

General Information

The following laws pertain mainly to noncommercial saltwater fishing, shrimping, crabbing and shellfishing for personal consumption.

Individuals (age 16 and older) harvesting oysters or clams or individuals fishing for marine finfish from privately owned boats must purchase an annual or temporary Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Fishing piers and chartered vessels charging a fee for fishing and those offering fishing boats for rent must purchase a Marine Recreational Fisheries license annually. Applications for Pier and Charter Vessel Licenses are available from the DNR office in Charleston.

Any person engaged in selling any fish or fishery product, including bait, must first obtain a license from the Marine Resources Division. Regulations concerning commercial saltwater fishing are provided with commercial licenses and are available through Marine Resources Division at the address below.

For more information contact: SCDNR, Marine Resources Division, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422, (843) 953-9300.

For federal fishery limits and regulations, contact: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407, (843) 571-4366.

Annual License & Permit Fees

Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License	
Annual Resident License.....	\$10
Annual Non-Resident License	\$35
Temporary Resident License (14 days) .	\$5
Temporary Non-Resident License (14 days)	\$11
Shrimp Baiting License	
Resident License.....	\$25
Non-Resident License	\$500
Commercial Pier License (>100).....	\$350
Commercial Pier License (≤100).....	\$150
Charter Vessel Permit	
(6 or less passengers).....	\$150
(7-49 passengers)	\$250
(50 or more passengers)	\$350
Rental Boat License	\$40

Saltwater Fishing Methods & Devices

Hook and Line

Permits/License: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License required when fishing from privately owned boats or when transporting catch in privately owned boats. Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required when fishing for sharks in federal waters, or when fishing for tuna, billfish and swordfish in both state and federal waters.

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to fish from a boat within 300 feet of commercial fishing piers extending into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Fishing from the shore in the waters under or within 50 feet on either side or beyond the end of any ocean fishing pier in Horry County is prohibited.

Gigging

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to gig red drum or spotted seatrout during Dec., Jan. and Feb.
- It is unlawful in Georgetown County to gig for fish in salt waters from the northern tip of North Island to the northern tip of Magnolia Beach during daylight hours.

Bangsticks

• It is unlawful to take, have in one's possession or to land or sell any species of fish taken by means of a bangstick or similar device.

Cast Nets (Other than Shrimp)

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License.

Seines & Gill Nets (Anchor, Set, Stake & Drift Nets)

Permits/Licenses:

- Gill nets, haul seines (except shrimp seines under 40 ft.), \$10 for each 100 net ft. or fraction thereof.
- Powerboats transporting nets or other commercial fishing equipment must have vessel decals.

Seasons: No closed season in saltwater; (except shad, sturgeon and herring).

Restrictions:

- Red drum and spotted seatrout may not be taken by nets. Sharks may not be taken by gill nets
- Gill nets no longer than 100 feet with a 3-inch minimum stretched mesh size may be used only in unrestricted areas of the Atlantic Ocean. Gill nets no longer than 100 yard with 3-inch minimum stretched mesh size may be used only in special designated inshore areas.
- Gill nets must be marked with one end bouy that is international orange in color with the name and address of owner. Operator must be within 500 feet of the net and have visual contact with the net at all times when deployed.
- Nets may not be set more than halfway across any waterway at any time.
- Stationary or fixed nets, including gill nets, may not be set or placed within 600 feet of a net previously set.
- Gill net users must be within 500 feet or hauling distance of the net at all times.
- It is unlawful to use any seine or gill net in

any waters within a state park; except, small hand seines and cast nets for taking shrimp are allowed.

Size & Catch Limits for Saltwater Fish

Note: Fishery Regulations are subject to change.

TL=Total Length, FL=Fork Length
State Waters extend from the saltwater-freshwater dividing line to the 3-mile limit.
AIW=Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway
Federal Waters extend from the 3-mile limit to 200 miles offshore (international waters).

All species in this section must be landed with head and tail intact.

Sport Fish

Red Drum (Channel Bass/Spottail)

Limit: 2 per person per day (state waters)
0 (federal waters)

Size: 15-inch minimum (TL) and 24-inch maximum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round or by gigging March through November.
- May not be harvested from federal waters.
- South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).

Spotted Seatrout

Limit: 10 per person per day (state waters)
Size: 13-inch minimum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round or by gigging March through November.
- South Carolina native caught fish may not be sold (state waters).

Flounders (Southern & Summer)

Limit: Rod & reel or gigging only - 20 per person per day (state waters)

Size: 12-inch minimum (TL) (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Size limits apply to both recreational & commercial fishing.

Striped Bass

Limit: 10 per person per day except 5 per day in Wando & Cooper rivers and Santee River downstream to the AIW.

Size: None in salt waters, except 21-inch minimum in the Wando & Cooper rivers and Santee River above the AIW.

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel year-round & may not be sold (state waters).
- Unlawful to take in saltwaters of the Savannah River.

Bluefish

Limit: 15 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions: No closed season

King Mackerel

Limit: 3 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: 24-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed catch limit.
- January 1 to December 31, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch is exceeded (state & federal waters).

Spanish Mackerel

Limit: 15 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: 12-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed catch limit.
- January 1 to December 31, fishery may be closed to all harvest if total allowable catch is exceeded (state & federal waters).

Cobia

Limit: 2 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: 33-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season
- Federal commercial mackerel permit needed to exceed catch limit.

Tarpon

Limit: 1 per person per day (state waters)

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- May be taken only by rod & reel & may not be sold.

Greater Amberjack

Limit: 1 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: 28-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Commercial harvest restrictions during April. Prohibits sale of fish harvested under bag limit when season is closed.

Sheepshead, Spadefish

Catch Limit: No more than 20 per person per day in aggregate with the snapper grouper complex species listed on this page.

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Bluerunners and tomtates are excluded from the bag limit.

Dolphin

Catch Limit: 7 per person or 26 per boat per day (state & federal waters); headboats may

have up to 50 per boat per day.

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions: No closed season

Atlantic Tunas

Yellowfin Tuna

Limit: 3 per person per day.

Size: 27-inch minimum (FL) (federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal Permit required.

Bigeye, Bluefin Tuna

Limit: Check current Federal Regulations by calling 1-888-USA-TUNA.

Size: 27-inch minimum (FL) (federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal Permit required.

Albacore, Skipjack

Limit: None

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Federal Permit required.

Porgies & Snappers

Red Porgy

Seasons/Restrictions:

- 1 per person per day.
- 14-inch minimum (TL).

Vermilion Snapper

Limit: 10 per person per day (state & federal waters) (recreational)

Size: 11-inch minimum (TL) recreational size limit; 12-inch minimum (TL) commercial size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Other Snappers

(Excluding Vermilion)

Red Snapper	20-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Lane Snapper	8-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Black Snapper	No size limit No closed season
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Blackfin, Cubera, Dog, Yellowtail, Gray, Mahogany, Silk, Schoolmaster & Queen Snapper	12-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Mutton Snapper	16-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Sea Bass, Grouper & Tilefish

Black Seabass

Limit: 20 per person per day

Size: 10-inch minimum (TL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season

Grouper Tilefish Combinations

Gag & Black Grouper	24-inch minimum (TL) <i>See restrictions</i>
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Scamp, Red, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth Groupers	20-inch minimum (TL) No closed season
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Snowey Grouper	
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Yellowedge Grouper	
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Golden Tilefish	No size limit
Sand Tilefish	No closed season
Blueline Tilefish	

Limits:

- 5 per person per day from this group, and no more than 2 Gag or Black Groupers may be included in the total (state & federal waters).

Restrictions:

- Purchase and sale of Gag or Black Grouper is prohibited during March & April.

Warsaw, Speckled Hind

Grouper

Limit: 1 warsaw and 1 speckled hind per vessel per trip

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No closed season.
- Purchase an/or sale is prohibited.

Nassau Grouper, Jewfish

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

- No open season

All Other Snapper Grouper

Complex Species Combined

Species: Including but not limited to: Gray, Queen and Ocean Triggerfish; Whitebone, Knobbed, Jolthead, Saucereye, Grass and Longspine Porgies; Scup, Sheepshead, Almaco, Bar, Crevalle and Yellow Jacks; Lesser Amberjack; Banded Rudderfish; Bluestripe, White, Smallmouth, French and Spanish grunts; Black Margate; Margate; Porkfish; Cottonwick; Sailors Choice; Spadefish; Puddingwife; Bank Sea Bass; Rock Sea Bass

Limit: 20 per person per day from this group

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

- Bluerunners and tomtates are excluded from the bag limit.
- No closed season.

Sharks

Permits/Licenses: Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required in federal waters.

Dogfish (Spiny & Smooth)

Limit: None (state & federal waters)

Size: No size limit

Atlantic Sharpnose

Limit: 1 per person per day (federal waters)

2 per person per day (state waters)

Size: No size limit

Bonnethead

Limit: 1 per person per day (state waters)

Size: No size limit (state waters)

For federal waters, Bonnethead Shark is included in the following list with the limit and size applying.

Sandbar, Silky, Blacktip, Spinner, Bull, Tiger, Lemon, Nurse, Scalloped Hammerhead, Great Hammerhead, Smooth Hammerhead, Blacknose, Finetooth, Shortfin Mako, Thresher, Porbeagle, Oceanic Whitetip and Blue Sharks

Limit: 1 shark per boat per trip from this group.

Size: 54-inch minimum (FL)

Sand Tiger, Bigeye Sand Tiger, Whale, Basking, White, Dusky, Bignose, Galapagos, Night, Caribbean Reef, Narrowtooth, Caribbean Sharpnose, Smalltail, Atlantic Angel, Longfin Mako, Bigeye Thresher, Sevengill, Sixgill and Bigeye Sixgill Sharks

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

• No open season. Sharks from this group may not be kept. If caught, sharks from this group must be released immediately.

Special Information

Special Management Zones - The following Artificial Reefs have been declared "Special Management Zones" and are protected by federal regulations: *BP-25, Beaufort 45, Betsy Ross, Bill Perry, C.J. Davidson, Cape Romain, Capers, Charleston 60, Comanche, Eagles Nest, Edisto 40, Edisto 60, Edisto Offshore, Fripp Island, Georgetown, Greenville, Hilton Head, Hunting Island, Kiawah, Little River Offshore, North Inlet, Paradise, Pawley's Island, Ten Mile, Vermilion, Wayne Upchurch, Will Goldfinch and Y-73.* Fishing may be conducted only with hook and line gear and spearfishing gear (excluding powerheads). The use of fish traps, longlines, gill nets, and trawls is prohibited. Powerheads (bangsticks) are prohibited except for safety purposes. It is unlawful to possess, land, or sell

any species of fish taken with a bangstick (reef and non-reef areas).

Unlawful to Sell Gamefish - The following species have been declared gamefish and native caught fish may not be sold; red drum (channel bass), spotted seatrout, striped bass and tarpon. The purchase, barter, trade, or sell of billfish, including marlin, sailfish and spearfish, is unlawful regardless of where taken or landed. Swordfish may be sold under commercial laws only.

Prohibited Practices - The use of dynamite, gun powder, lime or any other explosive in or about any waters of this state is unlawful.

It is unlawful to sell or offer for sale any sea turtles or to offer for sale, sell or destroy any sea turtle eggs. Sea turtles are protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act. It is unlawful to display, feed, net, trap, harpoon, molest or otherwise interfere with the well-being or normal activity of marine mammals of the orders Cetacea, Sirenia and Pinnipedia, including but not limited to bottlenose dolphin, spotted dolphin, common dolphin, manatee, porpoise, harbor seal and any species of whale in any waters of the state. Marine mammals are also protected by federal law.

Billfish

Federal Highly Migratory Species Permit required

Blue Marlin

Size: 99-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

• May be taken only by rod & reel and may not be sold.

White Marlin

Size: 66-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

• May be taken only by rod & reel and may not be sold.

Sailfish

Limit: None

Size: 63-inch minimum (FL) (state & federal waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

• May be taken only by rod & reel and may not be sold.

Sturgeon & Shad

Shortnose sturgeon

Limit: Possession is prohibited

Seasons/Restrictions:

• Unlawful to catch, buy, sell, possess or ship. Classified as an endangered species.

Atlantic sturgeon

Limit: Possession is prohibited (state waters)

Seasons/Restrictions:

• No open season until further notice.

Unlawful to catch, buy, sell, possess or ship.

American Shad, Herring

Limit: 10 Shad per person per day except in

Santee River and Rediversion canal (20 per person per day).

1 U.S. bushel of Herring per person per day.

Size: No size limit

Seasons/Restrictions:

• No closed season for recreational fishing with castnet or hook & line, including rod & reel. Skimbow nets allowed Feb. 1 through Apr. 30. Gill nets allowed as for commercial use.

Shrimp Harvesting

Catch Limits for Shrimp

Certain exemptions apply to permitted charter vessels and licensed bait dealers. For information contact SCDNR, Marine Resources Division, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422 or call 843-953-9300.

Taking Shrimp Without Bait

Permits/Licenses: None for personal use

Limits/Seasons:

• 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed shrimp per boat, or per person per day if no boat is used or among seining parties. May 1 - Dec. 15.

• 12 dozen dead or live shrimp per boat Dec. 16 through April 30

Shrimp Baiting

Permits/Licenses: Shrimp Baiting License and pole marker tags required. A license is not required for residents assisting license holders. Permits available after August 1.

Seasons: 60-day period set by SCDNR beginning at 12:00 noon on the last Friday on or before Sept. 15.

Limits:

• 48 quarts whole or 29 quarts headed shrimp per boat, or per person per day if no boat is used or among seining parties.

Restrictions:

• Shrimp caught over bait cannot be sold.
• No more than 10 poles can be used per day. Poles may not exceed 1-inch in diameter, and must have a numbered tag attached which corresponds with the shrimp baiting license. Each pole must also be marked with reflective tape.
• All poles must be set within 100 yards, and the distance between each set of poles must be at least 25 yards. Poles may not be set within 50 yards of any dock, public landing or boat ramp. Unattended poles will be confiscated.
• The owner of a private dock or person with written permission may bait from that dock once properly licensed.
• Shrimp pots or traps are prohibited.
• Individuals who are: 1) officers of a corporation which, owns a vessel specified on a trawl license, 2) masters of a vessel specified on a trawl license application; 3) licensed to use a channel net; 4) licensed to use a cast net for a commercial purpose; or 4) licensed as a wholesale seafood dealer may not obtain a shrimp baiting license.
• Cast nets used for taking shrimp over bait must have a minimum mesh size of ½ inch square.

Shrimp Seines

Permits/Licenses: None for personal use

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- Maximum length of shrimp seine, 40 feet; minimum mesh size, 1/2 inch square mesh nylon (9/16 inch square mesh cotton).
- Tail bags or pockets are not allowed on seines when pulled by hand.
- Staked seines are considered commercial channel net devices, and allowances and restrictions are provided with the purchase of a commercial license.
- One limit per seine per day.

Trawling

Permits/Licenses: Commercial Fishing, Boat Decal, and Gear License required.

Restrictions: Trawling for personal use is restricted to the same license requirements, areas and seasons as commercial trawling. This information is provided with license.

Crab, Lobster & Shellfish Harvesting

Blue crabs

Limit: None (state waters)

Size: 5-inch minimum carapace width (point to point)

Restrictions:

- Female blue crabs with egg mass (sponge) must be returned to water unharmed immediately.
- Not more than two pots or traps per person, with owner's name attached to a yellow float, for recreational purposes.

Stone crabs

Limit: None (state waters)

Size: Claws must be 2¾-inch minimum forearm (propodus)

Restrictions:

- Only the larger of two claws may be kept.
- It is unlawful to possess any stone crab body, live or dead.
- No claw may be removed from a female with egg mass.

Spiny lobster

Limit: 2 per person per day (state & federal waters)

Size: 3-inch minimum carapace

Restrictions:

- No closed season.
- Removal of tail at sea prohibited.
- No harvest of berried females is allowed.
- No explosives, poisons, spears, or piercing devices other than fishing hooks are allowed.

Oysters

Limit: 2 U.S. bushels per person per day from public or state shellfish grounds. No person may harvest oysters recreationally on more than two calendar days per any seven day period. No boat or vehicle, or boat and vehicle combination may contain more than three personal limits regardless of the number of persons on the boat or in the vehicle. In order to possess three personal limits there must be three persons on the boat or in the vehicle. If there are four or more persons on the boat or in the vehicle there is a maximum possession limit of three personal limits.

Size: None

Restrictions:

- Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by the DNR.
- A person may harvest recreationally no more than two days per seven day period.

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fishing License required.

Clams

Limit: ½ U.S. bushel per person per day from public or state shellfish grounds. No person may harvest clams recreationally on more than two calendar days per any seven day period. No boat or vehicle, or boat and vehicle combination may contain more than three personal limits regardless of the number of persons on the boat or in the vehicle. In order to possess three personal limits there must be three persons on the boat or in the vehicle. If there are four or more persons on the boat or in the vehicle there is a maximum possession limit of three personal limits.

Size: 1-inch minimum thickness

Restrictions:

- Season typically Sept. 16 through May 14; may be shortened or extended by the DNR.
- A person may harvest recreationally no more than two days per seven day period.

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fishing License required.

Crab & Shellfish Methods & Devices

Crab Pots

Permits/Licenses: None for up to two pots. A Commercial Fishing License, Boat Decal, and Gear License is required for over two pots. (Other information is provided with licenses.)

Seasons: No closed season

Restrictions:

- If unattended, each pot must bear name or license number of owner.
- No crab pot shall be left unattended in coastal waters more than 5 days.
- No crab trap or pot may be set within 100 yards of a public boat landing or launching area or set so as to be left dry at low tide.
- A float attached to a crab pot or trap must be made of solid, buoyant material which does not sink upon being punctured or cracked. The floats must be constructed of plastic, PVC Spongex, plastic foam, or cork. The primary float for a recreational pot or trap must be yellow in color and at least ten inches in length if rectangular, cylindrical, or conical and at least five inches in diameter or width. Round or spherical floats must be at least six inches in diameter. Buoy lines for crab pots must be made of nonfloating material.

Gathering Shellfish (Oysters & Clams)

Permits/Licenses: Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License

Seasons: Typically Sept. 16 through May 14 (½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset)

Restrictions:

- It is unlawful to use scoops, scrapes, tongs, or dredges to take shellfish without a permit.
- Shellfish may be harvested recreationally from State shellfish grounds and Public shellfish grounds. Most Public and State shellfish grounds are marked with signs. Recreational harvesting is allowed on Culture permit grounds (formerly leases), but only when the harvester has in possession, written permission from the Culture permit holder. License must be in possession while harvesting.

Maps of areas where oysters and clams may be gathered in season for recreation may be found on the web at www.dnr.state.sc.us or by writing Marine Resources at PO Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422.

SHRIMP BAITING PERMIT APPLICATION

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Marine Resources Division

Social Security No. _____

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

County _____ Telephone _____

Drivers License No. _____ State _____

Date of Birth _____ Sex (M) (F) Race _____

I understand that persons whose recreational privileges are suspended are not eligible to apply for, hold, or use SCDNR recreational licenses, permits, stamps, or tags.

Signature _____

Note: Applications with incomplete information will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

Residents: Submit \$25.00 check or money order payable to SCDNR with application. (Non-residents, \$500.00 Cashiers Check or Money Order only.)

SCDNR License Office:
PO Box 12559
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
(843) 953-9031

SCDNR License Office:
PO Box 11710
Columbia, SC 29211
(803) 734-3833



DNR

Date _____
Please review the above information, sign and return with the appropriate fee to either of the mailing addresses.

2003 Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License Report

Introduction

The Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License plays an important role in SCDNR's efforts to monitor and wisely manage the state's marine recreational fisheries by providing information and needed funding. The License provides a means to count and survey boat anglers and shellfishers. It is a way to generate revenues that are used for programs, operations and activities that benefit the recreational saltwater anglers and the resources they target. Since its effective date of 1 July 1992, the program has sold approximately 959,093 stamps/licenses to fishermen and 48,557 stamps to collectors. Art collectors and conservationists have purchased approximately 12,891 limited edition and medallion prints by artists such as Diane Peebles, Tom Krause and South Carolina's own Bernie Slice and Matt Constantine. The program has generated \$5.7 M in net revenues with approximately 81% derived from the sale of stamps/licenses, 6.4% from print sales and the remainder from the sale of annual permits.

During 2002 the program underwent some major changes. Effective 1 July, 2002 the cost and structure of the saltwater license was changed by the SC Legislature to mirror the State's Freshwater license. This gives residents and out-of-state anglers a variety of license options to choose from. It will also provide an estimated doubling of the revenues which will be used for activities of interest to the State's in-shore anglers, including the development of in-shore artificial reefs, oysterbed restoration through recycling and red drum stock enhancement projects. We hope to bring you more about these new exciting efforts as they begin to make headway.

During the period May 1, 2001 through April 30, 2002 a total of \$659,229 was generated by the program. Summaries of revenues collected during this period and funding allocations for the 2002/03 period are depicted graphically in Figure 1. The law stipulates that no more than 25% of the revenues generated for a given year may be used for administration and law enforcement activities. Of the funds available, \$11,000 was used to publish the print and pay artist royalties, \$32,411 was used for administration, \$129,646 was provided for coastal law enforcement, leaving \$486,172 to fund eligible projects and activities.

Saltwater License Program Success Story – Marine Game Fish Tagging Program

The South Carolina Marine Game Fish Tagging Program is in its 29th year as a part of the SCDNR Marine Resources Division. The program has long been a fixture among many South Carolina saltwater recreational anglers who have helped promote personal stewardship and responsible angling ethics. Tagging and releasing has provided anglers with a great deal of satisfaction, while at the same time supplying biologists with useful information about marine game fish. Over 13,000 anglers have participated in the program and the current database now contains nearly 109,000 individual records on tagged fish. An additional 10,000 records highlight the recaptures reported by participants.

Recaptures have been the foundation for the biological data that supports sound fishery management decisions. For example, in 1990 the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) incorporated seasonal tag and recapture data on greater amberjack into a fishery management plan that was eventually utilized in developing a seasonal closure and bag limit to protect spawning stocks. Another amberjack recapture in 2002 provided further documentation that Gulf and South Atlantic stocks mix. Other recaptures of coastal migratory pelagics allowed better insight into stock dynamics. Such was the case in 1986 when several cobia recaptures occurred off Galveston, Texas and Biloxi, Mississippi. The initial taggings off South Carolina, and subsequent recaptures, provided proof that dismissed the previously accepted idea that there were non-integrating stocks of cobia in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Significant recapture data on highly migratory species resulted in the first documented transequatorial crossing of an Atlantic blue marlin. Consequently, ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) dropped their five-degree

dividing line for Atlantic stock blue marlin. In 2001, tag and release data proved to be the only source of data in South Carolina for recreationally caught sharks that was species specific. This information was provided to a technical committee established after a series of shark attacks occurred along the East Coast.

Partnering up with the angling community is an efficient and cost effective means of data collection, which has proved useful in determining movement, seasonality trends, release mortality and general population dynamics of many saltwater game fish. Furthermore it allows anglers to participate in the process of resource conservation management. Anglers participating in the public tagging program receive constant feedback on the fish they have tagged and recaptures that have occurred. T-shirts, hats, and towels are awarded as an incentive to anglers to report the capture and re-release of tagged fish. After all, one fish released is one more that can be caught again. For more information on the Marine Game Fish Tagging Program contact Mr. Robert Wiggers at (843) 953-9363; email: wiggersr@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us. Information on the program can also be obtained off the website at: www.dnr.state.sc.us/marine/pub/seascience/tagfish.html

2002/03 Activities

Artificial Reefs – Twenty artificial reef construction projects were completed on twelve different permitted sites since January 2002. This included the sinking of 100 subway cars, concrete reef cones, 1,500 tons of concrete rubble, several deck barges and landing craft. In addition 6 damaged and missing buoys were replaced. - \$130,000

Finfish Management – Conservation and angler ethics are promoted through the Gamefish Tagging Program (see Success Story). An effort to tag dolphinfish continued this year with a total of 457 dolphin tagged and 9 recaptured. The red drum stocking program continued their efforts during 2002, stocking 646,959 fry in the Wando River and 679,045 fry in the May River. - \$99,452

Finfish Monitoring - Information needed to monitor population trends for key recreational species is enhanced through the Fish Carcass Collection Program. This program collected a total of 1,413 fish samples from its 7 drop off sites as well as from fishing tournaments. When combined with other data, managers can assess the health of important species such as red drum, flounders and trout. - \$112,567

Shellfish Management – Over 11,000 bu of shell was planted on 5 public grounds. The public shell recycling program now has 13 drop off sites established for the public to place their shell. Shellfish maps are available to the public free of charge by writing: Recreational Shellfish Maps, Office of Fisheries Management, SCDNR, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston S.C. 29422-2559 or by calling (843) 953-9854 or from the SCDNR Web site ([HTTP://WWW.DNR.STATE.SC.US](http://WWW.DNR.STATE.SC.US)) - \$52,519

Shellfish Monitoring – All public shellfish grounds were inspected and signs were replaced on grounds as needed. Small and large scale demonstration sites have been established to test how three different shell types attract small larval oysters. In addition, some of the shell has been covered with plastic mesh, which may help stabilize the shell against boat wakes and improve oyster survival.- \$51,634

Education and Information – The Office of Public Affairs continues to educate the public by providing informational packages and publications up and down the entire coast of South Carolina. Popular natural history publications on spotted seatrout and red drum, the SeaScience series, maps, rules and regulations and FishRulers are just a few of materials available to the angling public. In addition, staff routinely interact with teachers and students focusing on the diversity and value of our natural resources and their conservation. - \$40,000

For information on the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License Program in South Carolina, contact Wayne Waltz, Assistant Director, Office of Fisheries Management, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, S.C. 29422, (843) 953-9389.

Figure 1. Source of revenue collected in 2001/02 and how the Marine Recreational Fisheries License Program allocated those funds in 2002/03.

